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Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities

Note verbale dated 16 March 2005 from the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman

The Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Chairman of the Committee and has the honour to transmit herewith the national report of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania in accordance with the guidance for reports pursuant to paragraphs 6 and 12 of resolution 1455 (2003) (see annex).

The Mission also wishes to inform the Committee that with a view to facilitating its contacts with Mauritanian national officials, Mr. Lafdhal Ould Abeh, deputy director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation department of international organizations, has been designated as a liaison between the Mauritanian Government and the Committee.

The contact details of Mr. Ould Abeh will be transmitted to the Committee as soon as possible.

05-27399 (E) 230305 230305

Annex to the note verbale dated 16 March 2005 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee

National report of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania addressed to the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) in accordance with the guidance for reports under paragraphs 6 and 12 of resolution 1455 (2003)

I

1. The competent Mauritanian agencies have been conducting investigations and inquiries into the HASSEM Movement (Hareke Islamiya Al Mouritania, Mauritanian Islamic Movement) since 1994. Those investigations have shown that the organization is composed of several movements and factions, including a pro-jihad one identified with Al-Qaida. The arrest of members of that group revealed that Al-Qaida had already established a presence in Mauritania. The members acknowledged officially and publicly that they belonged to Al-Qaida, apologized and pledged to cease such activities. Two of them have kept their word and are no longer involved in any such activity. They include:

- Newewi, who is now elderly, and Chaer.

The others have left Mauritania, including:

- Abu Hafs (Mahfoudh Ould el Waled) who is purported to be in Afghanistan after staying in Sudan, the United Arab Emirates, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan. According to unconfirmed intelligence, he is alleged to have also stayed in Senegal;
- Noumane Ould Ahmed Bellahi is reported to have died in Afghanistan during the last war.

This information has been transmitted to the security services of all friendly countries and of all organizations involved in counter-terrorism.

After the movement was disbanded, Mohamedou Ould Sillahi was also arrested for belonging to Al-Qaida. He and Ahmed Ould Abdel Aziz communicate regularly with their families by letter through the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The group had maintained relations with the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group. According to unconfirmed intelligence, the Group was allegedly involved in the attacks in Casablanca, Morocco on 11 May 2003.

II

2. Mauritania was among the first countries in the world to denounce terrorism and to be involved in combating it by training its security services and adapting its laws and regulations to the new realities created by that scourge.

Consequently, all lists and information concerning persons likely to be involved directly or indirectly with terrorism are updated and transmitted in detail to

judicial authorities, financial oversight agencies, security and police forces, immigration and customs agencies and consular offices.

3. The most pressing problem is the lack of identity photographs and descriptions which include distinguishing marks and the spelling of names to allow those on the list to be identified.

4. Aside from the nationals referred to in paragraph I.1 of this report and nationals not on the new list we have not identified a single case to date throughout Mauritanian territory.

5. This question was answered in paragraph 1. The individuals or groups associated with Bin Laden and Al-Qaida were referred to in paragraph I.1.

6. We know of no such case.

7. See the list in annex II (7).

8. All underground movements liable to be terrorist or violent have been dismantled and their leaders brought to justice. No such unauthorized activity in Mauritania is possible. The laws and regulations in force in Mauritania, consistently updated for greater effectiveness, preclude such activity.

III

Aware of the problem of transnational financial crime, the Mauritanian authorities have quickly worked to promote efforts to combat money-laundering and the financing of terrorism and to establish a protection mechanism for the banking and financial system through the following measures:

- Ratification of the relevant United Nations conventions and protocols to combat such crime, particularly the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism;
- Central Bank Governor directive No. 007/GR/01 provides for implementation of the Security Council resolutions on combating the financing of terrorism and the freeze on financial assets and other economic resources of persons and entities on the list established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1267 (1999) (among other resolutions);
- Creation of a special anti-money-laundering unit within the Central Bank.

9. – Act 73 118 on the statute of the Central Bank of Mauritania, by which the Central Bank Governor derives his regulatory power in the banking and financial sector.

– Act 95 011 on regulation of the banking profession, by which the Central Bank exercises oversight over banks and financial institutions.

10. and 11.– Establishment of a specialized oversight and investigative structure to gather financial intelligence, and development of a databank on all suspicious capital flows (directive No. 45/GR/00).

– Due-diligence requirements include close monitoring by banks of their clients' accounts to identify the sources of funds and any possible connection with the list of individuals, entities, undertakings, groups associated with Usama bin Laden, Al-Qaida (directive No. 45/GR/00). Financial institutions and

establishments authorized by the Central Bank are required to notify it of any transaction linked to persons, groups or entities connected with the list established by the Committee.

12. and 13.– To date, no transaction has been detected relating to individuals, entities, undertakings or groups connected to the list established by the Committee.

– To date, no transaction has been released which had earlier been frozen in relation to funds, financial assets or economic assets related to Usama bin Laden or members of Al-Qaida or the Taliban or associated individuals or entities.

14. The transfer of funds from Mauritania abroad is regulated by Act No. 2004/42, which establishes the procedures for external financial relations and bank reporting. The Central Bank has the legal authority to monitor the origin and destination of such funds and the nature of the transactions.

– Transfers are carried out by banking and financial institutions authorized by the Central Bank in accordance with the legal and regulatory provisions in force, including restrictions imposed on individuals and entities identified by the Committee. Such operations are subject to regular monitoring by the Central Bank.

– Foreign exchange offices are authorized by the Central Bank for dealings in foreign notes and coin in accordance with the foreign exchange regulations in force.

– The hawala system of the informal economy is not authorized by the country's monetary authorities.

– Two bills on the suppression of money-laundering and the financing of terrorism are being finalized for submission at the next session of parliament.

– This legislative framework provides for:

– A prevention mechanism to meet the requirements of client oversight and identification, monitoring of transactions and record keeping;

– A warning mechanism to meet the obligations on banks and financial institutions to report suspicious transactions (including those involving precious metals) and the submission of relevant reports by those banks and non-banking financial institutions to a committee specialized in the analysis of financial information.

– Measures to prevent the establishment of bogus companies.

IV

15. Specific directives have been issued to diplomatic and consular missions and immigration and border control services to prevent visas from being granted to any person whose character is questionable and to deny entry into the country of individuals who might be affiliated with terrorist or criminal organizations, particularly Al-Qaida, the Taliban and population groups close to them. No passport may be issued until an inquiry is made and the bearer meets all the requirements to

show that he or she is not likely to have direct or indirect relations with terrorist or criminal organizations.

16. Yes, every one of the listed persons has been included in our national exclusion list or border checkpoint list.

17. The updated list is transmitted to the appropriate authorities daily or as soon as any information on the relevant individuals being monitored is received.

No, unfortunately, we do not have the electronic means to review the data at all entry points. Our main airport in Nouakchott, however, does have such capability.

18. No; none.

19. The list is always transmitted to our consulates. Our visa-issuing authorities have never identified any visa applicant whose name appears in the list.

20. On principle, and in accordance with laws and regulations in force, there are no arms sales in Mauritania. Apart from State bodies and security forces, no natural or legal person may sell or buy arms. The Director General of National Security may, however, issue permits to purchase and bear firearms, mainly for hunting purposes, to persons whose character is unassailable.

21. The current situation of legislation and regulations in Mauritania and the accompanying administrative measures are the best way to prevent terrorists from obtaining weapons or material in our country.

22. The answers are contained in paragraphs 20 and 21.

23. Mauritania does not produce weapons.

24. Yes, our country is prepared to assist Member States who so wish to implement the measures set forth in the aforementioned resolutions. For its part, it also wishes to receive the assistance that it needs in the following areas:

- The procurement of technical equipment;
- Professional training;
- Exchange of intelligence and information.

25. Only the areas of technical equipment procurement and professional training, once they are supported by specific assistance, may improve our capacity to implement the sanctions regime.

26. We believe that the sharing of information between security services involved in counter-terrorism, and assistance to countries in need in improving their equipment and professional training, should be encouraged.